

Appl. No. 09/986,507
Atty. Docket No. P21676

REMARKS

Initially, Applicants would like to express their appreciation to the Examiner for the acknowledgment of Applicants' Information Disclosure Statements by return of the Form PTO-1449. However, Applicants note that the Examiner has not acknowledged that the drawings are acceptable, and it is respectfully requested that the Examiner indicate the same in the next Official action.

In the specification, paragraphs on pages 3, 6 and 7 have been amended for clarification to overcome the Examiner's objections to the disclosure. Thus, it is believed that the specification, as presently amended, is clear, and the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the objections thereto.

Claims 1-8 remain pending in the present application. Claims 3-8 have been withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

The Examiner has acknowledged that claims 1 and 2 are directed to allowable subject matter, but fail to particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention. By the present amendment, claims 1 and 2 have been amended for clarification, and not to overcome any prior art of record. Accordingly, it is believed that claims 1 and 2 now clearly comply with the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1 and 2 on this ground be withdrawn and that an early indication of the allowance of these claims be given.

In view of the Examiner's earlier restriction requirement, Applicants retain the right to present claims 3-8 in a divisional application.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attached thereto.

Applicants have made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believe that they have now done so.

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Should the Examiner have any questions concerning this Response, or the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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October 14, 2003
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